

Susa Tannenbaum, University of Connecticut Health Center

in support of

SB 857- AN ACT CONCERNING LICENSURE FOR GENETIC COUNSELORS

February 20, 2015

Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter, Senator Markley, Representative Srinivasan and members of the Public Health Committee, my name is Susan Tannenbaum, M.D. and I am here to testify in strong support of Senate Bill 857- An Act Concerning Licensure for Genetic Counselors.

I am the Medical Director of the Clinical and Translational Breast Program at UCONN and see many women and a rare man with breast cancer. I interact with the entire health care team for women including gynecologists, surgeons, radiologists, radiation oncologists and primary care doctors. I have worked very closely with genetic counselors at UCONN Health for the past 11 years, in the area of hereditary cancer risk assessment. These individuals who have a Master's degree and mandatory continuing education are integral parts of the health care team. I refer patients for evaluation, counseling and recommendations for genetic testing for conditions such as Hereditary Breast and Ovarian Cancer Syndrome , Li Fraumeni syndrome and other rare conditions that involve inherited predisposition to cancer. The skills that genetic counselors bring to our medical oncology service do not end in the clinic with patients. They teach our fellows, residents, medical students and other health care providers. They do not only understand the technical scientific aspects of cancer counseling, they are skilled in psychology and help ensure that my patients have support and compassionate care. Other practitioners may do genetic testing, but genetic counselors, who are now licensed in 19 states, provide the whole package which is truly invaluable. Getting an answer to a genetic test may be easy, but asking the right question, getting a meaningful answer and giving it an interpretation that is understandable is a very different thing. When I refer my patients I want to know and I want them to know that they are going to see individuals who have the highest quality of educations and training. That they are seeing someone who can give them expert explanations and recommendations that are a moving target in this new genetic world. It is what I would want for each of you. I hope this bill moves forward this year.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely, Susan Tannenbaum